

Electronic Comment Filing System (ECFS) 3.0 User Guide

May 2016

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What is ECFS?

The Federal Communications Commission's (FCC) Electronic Comment Filing System (ECFS) is a web-based application that enables attorneys, public interest groups, concerned citizens, journalists, bloggers and others to make comments on proceedings set forth by the FCC. ECFS has been modernized to provide advanced search features, a streamlined interface, improved processing, and increased scalability and resiliency.

Accessing ECFS

ECFS is a web-based application, and can be accessed from any current, major browser. The FCC strives to maintain compatibility with the browsers listed below, though the application may work with others.

- Chrome v48+
- Firefox v44+
- Safari v9+
- Internet Explorer v9+ (note: Microsoft now only supports v11)
- Microsoft Edge v25+

To access the application, navigate to https://prototype.fcc.gov/ecfs

From the ECFS home page, links are available to search and submit filings into the library of FCC official actions.

Public API

ECFS now provides a public Application Programming Interface (API), so that external users and organizations with the appropriate technical capabilities can interact with the application without having to go through the Website. Interested parties should first register for a free key at http://api.data.gov/.

Then see the documentation at https://prototype.fcc.gov/ecfs/public-api-docs.html to get started.

Submitting a Filing:

There are several ways to submit filings into ECFS:

Express Filings are a way for members of the public to provide brief text comments on an FCC
Ruling without having to complete the full submission form, and without having to attach a
supporting document. This encourages more public participation in the FCC's rulemaking
process.

- **Standard Filings** allow practitioners to file long-form comments on an FCC Ruling. Standard filings require more data fields to be filled out, and also require that the comment text be included in one or more document attachments.
- Non-Docketed Filings are comments posted in response to specific types of FCC Actions, categorized under the heading "FCC Inbox". Non-Docketed filings also require a document attachment, and some also require payment of a fee.

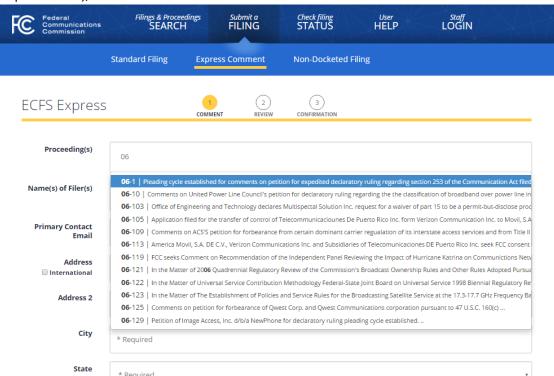
To submit a filing, select "**Submit a Filing**" from the main menu bar, and then select the type of comment you'd like to submit from the sub-menu that appears.

Type 1: EXPRESS Filing

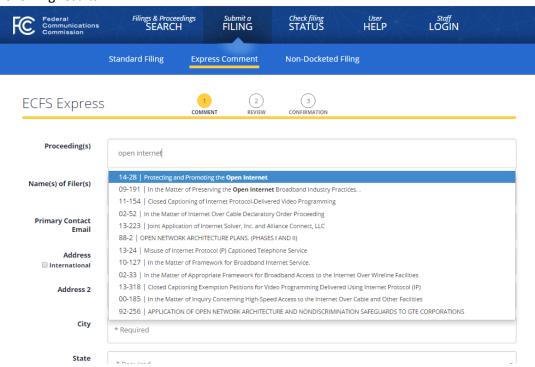
1. Choose a Proceeding:

The first step in filing an "Express Comment" is choosing a proceeding to comment on. Select a proceeding as shown below, then **click** on the desired proceeding, or highlight it using the cursor keys, and **press** the **<ENTER>** key on your keyboard to tag it. Repeating the process allows you to add multiple proceedings, thereby easily applying the same comment to more than one proceeding at once.

 by date: (in the example below, typing 06- returns all open proceedings from 2006 in the live dropdown box), or

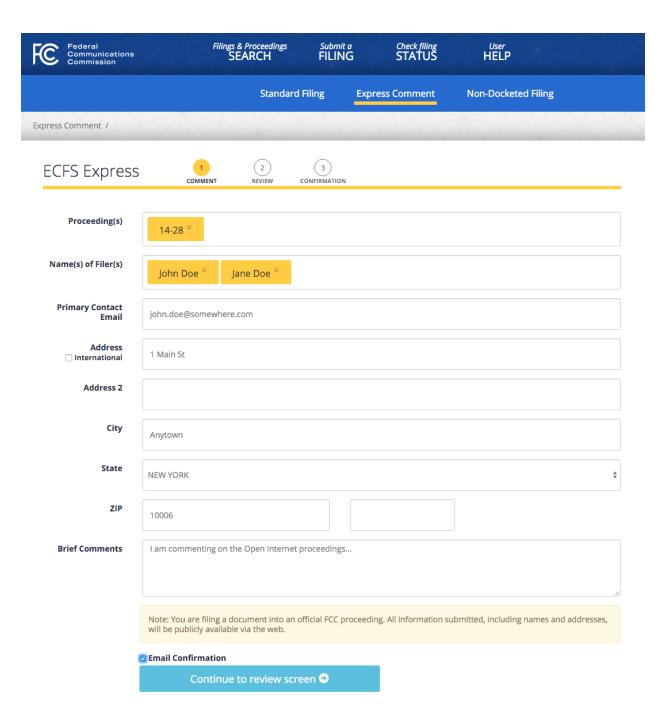


• by name: To choose a proceeding by name, type in a key word (or phrase) from the specific proceeding you want to comment on. For example, typing open internet yields the following results:

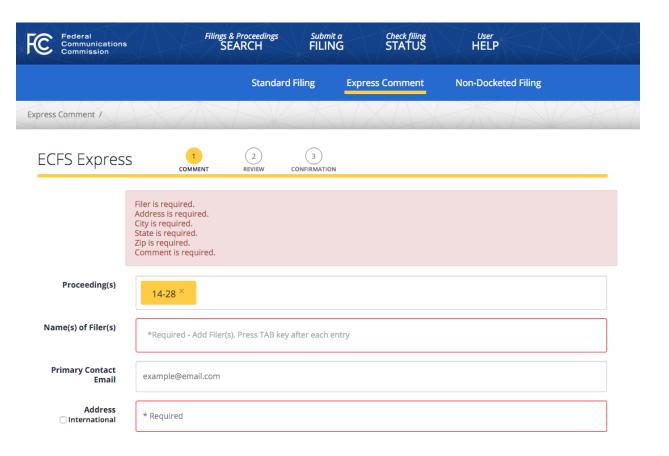


2. Complete the Form

Fill out the remainder of the form. For the "Name(s) of Filer(s)" field, type your full name and press the <ENTER> key on your keyboard to tag it. You can add multiple filer names; just press <ENTER> after each person's name to tag each one separately. If your address is not in the United States, check the "international" checkbox and type in your address in the correct postal format. If you would like an email confirmation sent to the Primary Contact Email you've provided, check the appropriate box at the bottom of the form. Then press Continue to Review Screen.

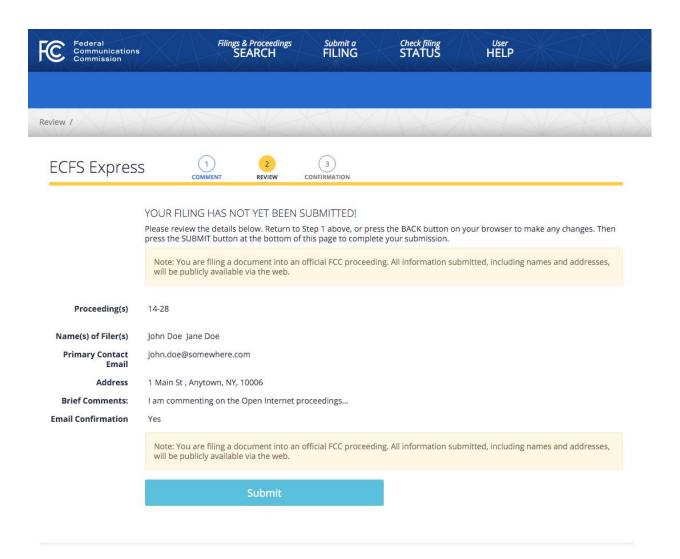


Certain fields are required. If they are not filled out, the system will not allow you to continue. Required fields that are not completed will be highlighted for you, as shown in the example below.



3. Review your Filing:

On the review screen, please carefully review your contact details and comments. Be aware that this information will become publicly searchable and available on the internet once it has been checked and posted by the FCC. If you have any corrections to make, click on step (1) at the top of the screen, or press the **BACK** button on your browser to return to the form. When you are satisfied with your submission, click "**Submit**".



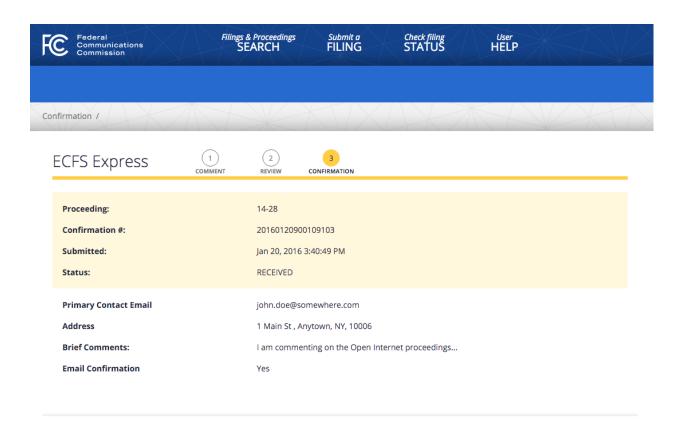
4. Receive Confirmation of your Filing:

After submitting, you will receive a confirmation page listing the details of your filing. If you have requested an email confirmation, that will appear shortly in your email inbox (make sure your spam filter allows messages sent from no-reply@fcc.gov). Please take note of the **Confirmation Number** given; you will need this to check on the status of your filing.

Also note the **Submission** timestamp of your filing, and the **Filing Status**.

The Submission timestamp reflects the current server time (the FCC operates in the Eastern Time Zone):

 If you have submitted your filing DURING business hours, your Filing Status will be RECEIVED, and your filing will be considered to have been officially accepted by the FCC at the time of submission. If you have submitted your filing AFTER business hours, or on a holiday or weekend, your submission will have Filing Status of **SUBMITTED**. It will be automatically **RECEIVED** at the start of the next official business day.



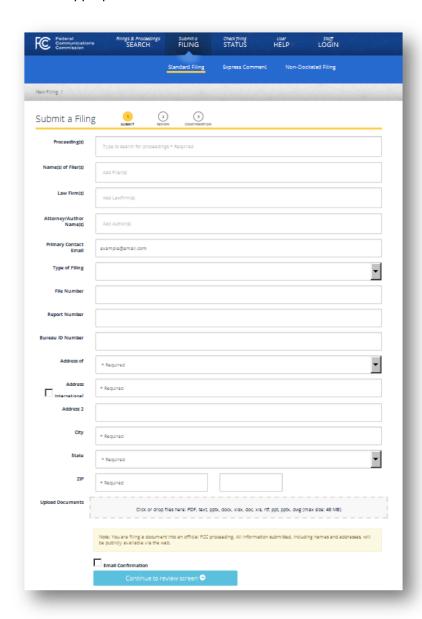
Type 2: STANDARD Filing

1. ECFS Standard Form

For a Standard Filing, select the respective submenu option under "Submit a Filing", and fill in the fields (required fields are marked "* Required" in the placeholder text).

- Select one or more proceedings, as described above for an Express Comment, pressing the <ENTER> key to tag each one.
- The "Name(s) of Filer(s)", "Law Firm(s)", and "Attorney/Author Name(s)" fields can also capture multiple entity names; just press <ENTER> after each entry to tag each one separately.
- Choose a Filing Type. The three most common types of filings have been placed at the top of the list for your convenience. If you are making an *ex parte* filing, please see step 2 below.

- If your address is not in the United States, check the "international" checkbox and type in your address in the correct postal format.
- If you would like an email confirmation sent to the Primary Contact Email you've provided, check the appropriate box at the bottom of the form.



2. Ex Parte Filings

If you are making an ex parte filing, select **Notice of Ex Parte** from the *Type of Filing* dropdown.

A new field will appear below it, titled *Presented To*. This field works like some of the fields at the top of the page, in that multiple items can be tagged into the field. However, only the FCC Bureaus and Offices given in the dropdown list are allowed. Click in the field, or press Enter, to bring up the list.



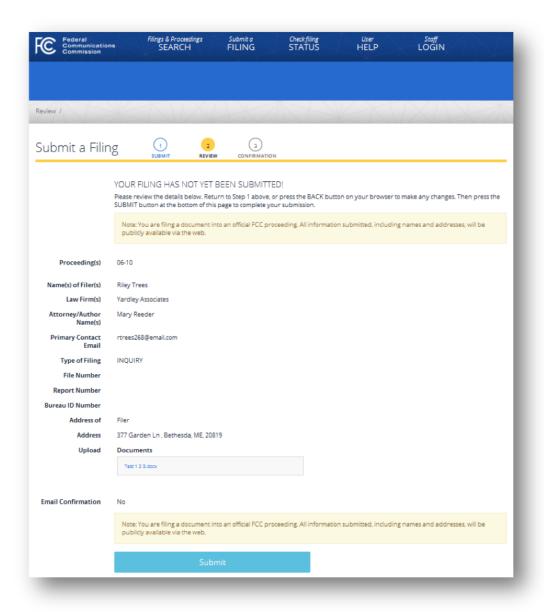
3. Attach Documents

You must attach at least one supporting document, by clicking the box or dropping files into the box. Please note that only certain file formats are accepted: PDF, text, pptx, xlsx, doc, xls, ppt, dwg. The maximum file size for each attachment is **48MB**. You may attach as many documents as necessary.



4. Review Your Filing

Press the "Continue to Review Screen" button. Carefully review the information on this page, and the document(s) that you will be submitting. Both the data fields and the documents will become publicly searchable and downloadable on the internet once the filing has been checked and posted by the FCC. If you need to make corrections, click on step (1) in the breadcrumb listing, or use the BACK button on your browser to return to the entry page. Click "Submit" to complete the submission.



5. Receive Confirmation of Your Filing

Once you have submitted, a confirmation page will appear, containing all the details of your filing. It will also include a Confirmation Number; take note of this number, as it can be used to track the status of your filing. If you opted to receive an email confirmation, you will receive the confirmation number in an email as well.

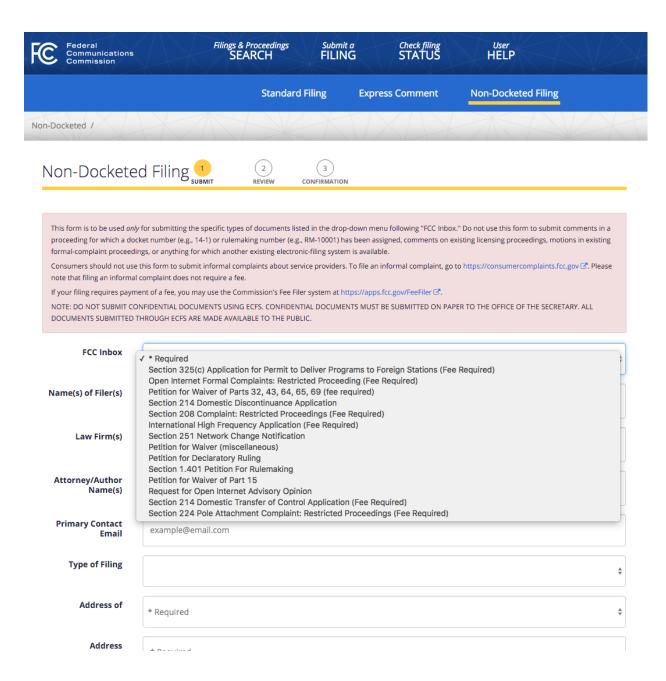
Type 3: NON-DOCKETED Filing

1. Non-Docketed Filing Form

The Non-Docketed Filing form is available only for special filing types categorized under "FCC Inbox". In order to make a filing into a non-docketed Inbox, select the appropriate FCC Inbox, and then fill in the remaining fields as appropriate.

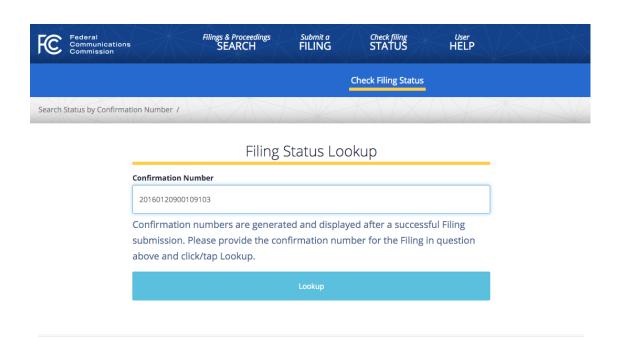
Like a Standard Filing, a Non-Docketed filing must be supported by an attached document. Add at least one document before continuing.

Please read carefully the warning message at the top of the page, and note that some non-docketed filings require the payment of a fee; this will require you to visit the FeeFiler application at https://apps.fcc.gov/FeeFiler.



Checking the Status of a Filing

To check the status of your filing (whether Standard, Express, or Non-Docketed), select the "Check Filing Status" main menu item. Enter the confirmation number that you received on the submission confirmation page, or from the confirmation email, and press "Lookup".



The Status of your submission appears.



Filing with confirmation #20160120900109103

For Proceeding on Jan 20, 2016

 Name of Filer Type of Filing Date Received Status
 John Doe COMMENT Jan 20, 2016 3:40:49 PM RECEIVED

Searching for Filings Basic Search

1. Home Page

The landing page for ECFS also serves as the default search page. The application defaults to a search for Filings, but a search for Proceedings is also available in the submenu.

At the top of the page is the full-text search bar, which can perform a comprehensive search of all the data and documents in ECFS. In addition, users have the option to narrow the search based on specific metadata fields. The full-text search can be combined with the metadata searches. To search, type in some text, then press **ENTER**, or click the blue **Search** button.

For a more detailed breakdown of text search capabilities, see Appendix A of this document.

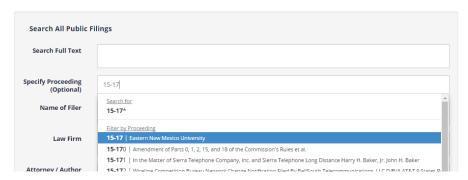
Welcome to the FCC's Electronic Comment Filing System. ECFS serves as the repository for official records in the FCC's docketed proceedings from 1992 to the present. The public can use ECFS to retrieve any document in the system, including selected pre-1992 documents.

pecify Proceeding (Optional)	Type to s	earch Proceedings. Press ENTE	R key after each selec	tion		
Name of Filer						
Law Firm						
Attorney / Author						
Date Received Range	From	MM/DD/YYYY	=	То	MM/DD/YYYY	≡
Posted Date Range	From	MM/DD/YYYY	i	То	MM/DD/YYYY	Ħ
Comment Date	From	MM/DD/YYYY	=	То	MM/DD/YYYY	Ħ
Reply Comment Date	From	MM/DD/YYYY	=	То	MM/DD/YYYY	=
Filer's / Author's City						
State						
Zip						
Express Comment						
Express Comment DA/FCC Number						
DA/FCC Number						
DA/FCC Number File Number						
DA/FCC Number File Number Bureau ID Number						

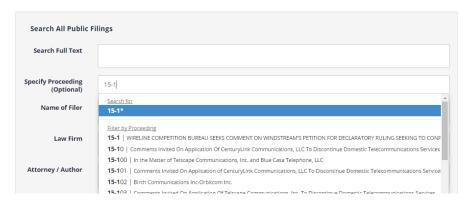
2. Filtering by Proceeding(s)

The *Proceeding(s)* field allows filtering of your search by one or more proceedings. To help you find the correct proceeding, the field performs a look-ahead query as you type:

By Proceeding/Docket Number – Start typing the docket number, and you will see that the
dropdown list changes as you type. Click the proceeding, or highlight it and press <ENTER> to
tag it.



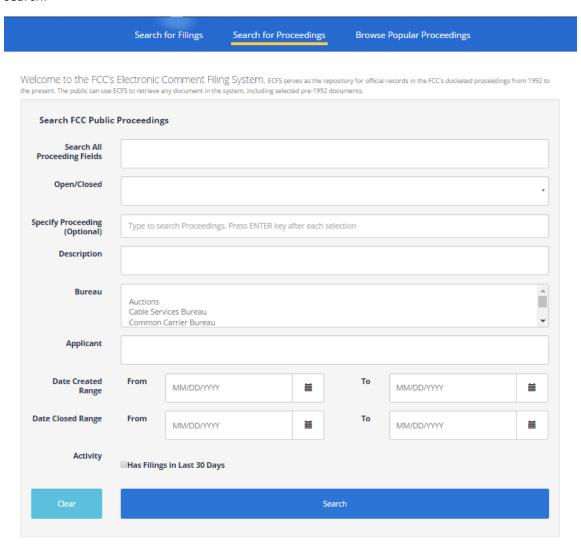
By Proceeding/Docket (Wildcard) – As you type a docket number, you may notice, at the top of the dropdown list, an option with a "*" (highlighted below). This creates a wildcard filter, widening the search in the example below to any proceeding beginning with "15-1", including "15-1", "15-10", "15-11", "15-123", etc.



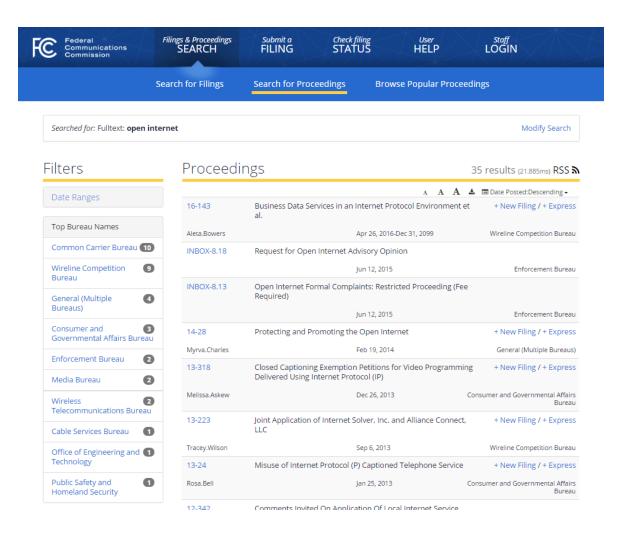
By Proceeding Name – If you don't know the Proceeding Number, you can also type the Name
of the proceeding. Highlight the correct Proceeding and press <ENTER> to tag it.

Searching for Proceedings

Select the *Proceedings* link in the submenu to search for Proceedings. The process is similar to the search for filings, but note that there are different search options for Filings search and Proceedings search:



The results list will display all the Proceedings that match your query. Click on the Proceeding/Docket number to view a listing of all the filings in that docket, or click on the +New Filing or +Express links at the right to create a new filing in that docket (closed dockets will not have these links). The docket number will be pre-filled for you in the form.



Browse Popular Proceedings ("Hot Dockets")

The most popular proceedings from the last 30 days are listed for easy access. Click the links to retrieve a list of filings related to the associated proceeding. If you'd like to create a new filing into any of those dockets, click on the *New Filing* or *Express Reply* links to the right of the proceeding name.



Welcome to the FCC's Electronic Comment Filing System. ECFS serves as the repository for official records in the FCC's docketed proceedings from 1992 to the present. The public can use ECFS to retrieve any document in the system, including selected pre-1992 documents.

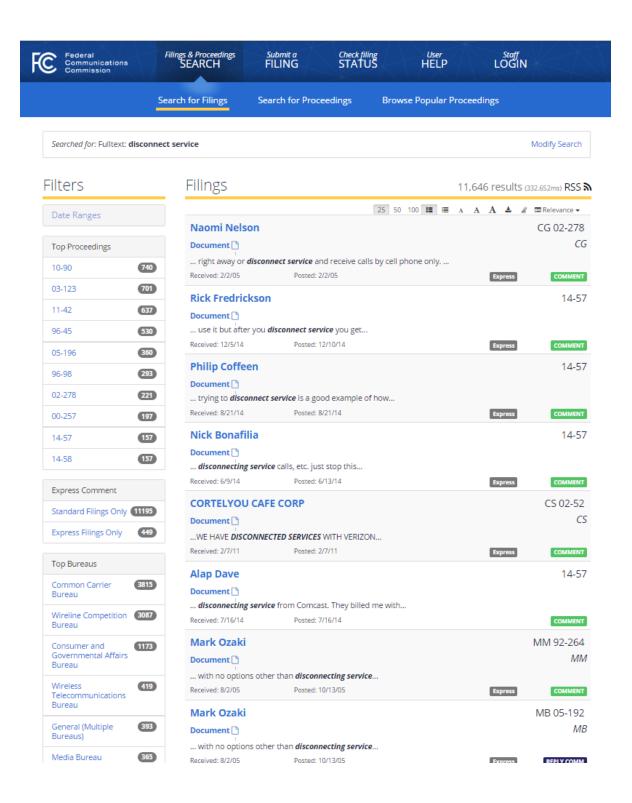
Proceeding	Subject	Comment/Reply	Last 30 days
15-149	Commission Opens Docket for Proposed Transfer of Control of Time Warner Cable, Inc. and Charter Communications Inc. and Proposed Transfer of Control of Bright House Networks from Advance/Newhouse Partnership to Charter Communications Inc Jun 23, 2015	Add New Filing or Express Reply	169331
16-42	Expanding Consumers' Video Navigation Choices - Feb 17, 2016	Add New Filing or Express Reply	105357
14-28	Protecting and Promoting the Open Internet - Feb 19, 2014	Add New Filing or Express Reply	62763
16-41	Promoting the Availability of Diverse and Independent Sources of Video - Feb 17, 2016	Add New Filing or Express Reply	36137
14-57	Applications of Comcast Corporation and Time Warner Cable Inc. for Consent to Assign or Transfer Control of Licenses and Applications - <i>Apr</i> 4, 2014	Closed for comment	26598
05-25	In the Matter of Special Access Rates for Price Cap Local Exchange Carriers AT&T Corp. Petition for Rulemanking to Reform Regulation of Incumbent Local Exchange Carrier Rates for Interstate Special Access Services Jan 21, 2005	Add New Filing or Express Reply	12118
12-268	Expanding the Economic and Innovation Opportunities of Spectrum	Add New Filing or Express Reply	9615

Working with Results

1. Results

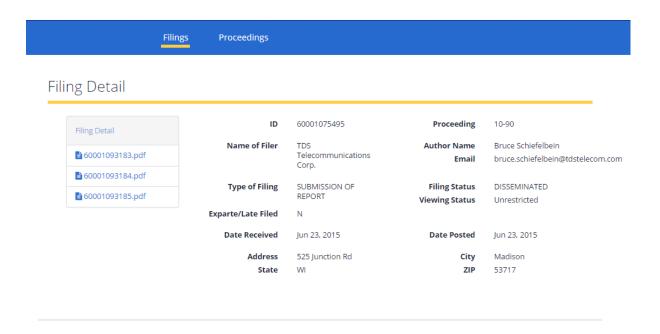
The results of your search will appear in a list in the center of the screen. Each record lists the Filer's Name, the associated Docket number(s), received and posted dates, matched text (for full-text searches), links to directly download associated documents (if applicable), and colored badges that help you to identify the type of filing.

Click on a link to open the Filing Detail screen.

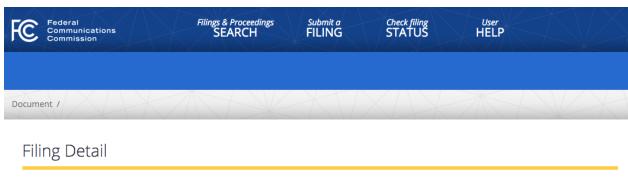


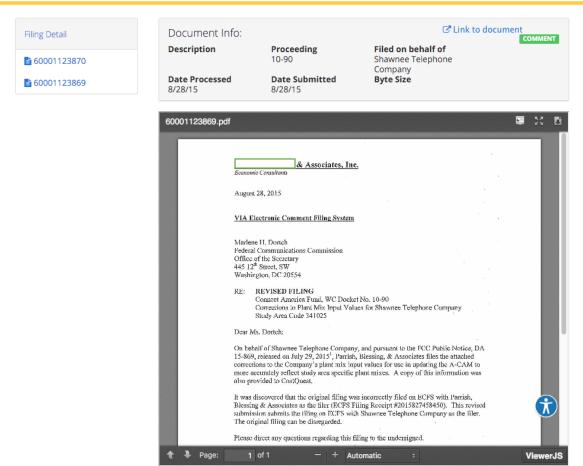
The Filing Detail screen displays metadata about the filing, including who filed it, and when. Additionally, the left column holds a list of all document attachments associated with the filing (for Express comments, there are no document links, but the text of the comment displays at the bottom of the metadata).

Click on any of the file attachments to preview it.



Documents can be previewed directly in the browser, or can be downloaded to your local computer. Convenience buttons within the viewer component also allow you to jump directly to a page, zoom in or out of the document, or expand to a full-page view. For disabled users, the built-in AudioEye (https://www.audioeye.com/) Ally component, shown as a blue icon at the bottom right, can read the document to you. More information on how to use it can be found in the ScreenReader section below.

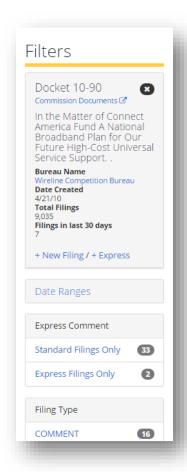




2. Results Filters

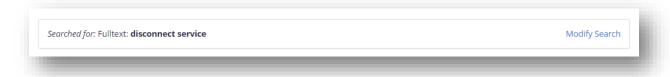
On the left-hand column of the results screen are a number of results filters. These allow you to further narrow down the results from your search. A number of options are available, including filing type, filer name, and whether or not they are Standard or Express filings.

If the results are limited to a single proceeding, the proceeding summary box (sometimes called the "face card") will appear at the top of the filter list. A link in the summary allows users to open a new window directly to the EDOCS listing for that docket.



3. Modify Search

At the top of the results list, your search criteria are displayed. If you'd like to make slight modifications to your search, you can click on the *Modify Search* link at the right, or press the **BACK** button on your browser. Clicking the *Filings* link from the submenu will also return you to the search page, but will clear out your search criteria in preparation for a new search.



4. View Options

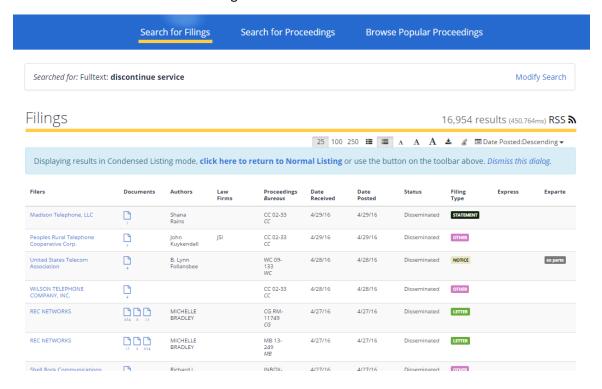
A number of options are available to tailor the results view, all available in the space directly above the results list.



- You can view 25, 50 or 100 filings on a page by selecting the appropriate option, as shown in the screenshot above.
- The differently-sized "A"s will change the font size. Click on the middle one to reset the font size to the default.
- You can subscribe to an RSS feed of the current search, by clicking on the RSS link. See <u>Appendix</u>
 B for more details on setting up an RSS feed.

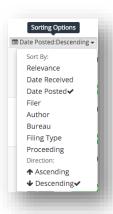
5. Condensed Listing

Additionally, there is a menu option called "Condensed Listing" that shows results in an extended list view. It is the icon next to "Normal Listing".



6. Sorting

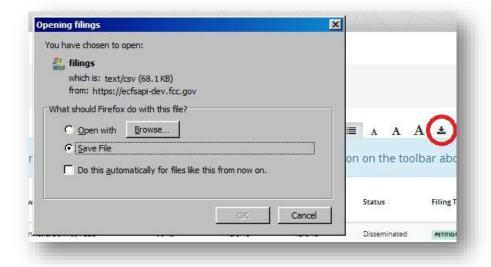
A number of sorting options are available at the right edge of the View Options bar, as shown below.



The default sort for all results is by the Posting (Dissemination) Date, in reverse chronological order.

7. CSV File Downloading

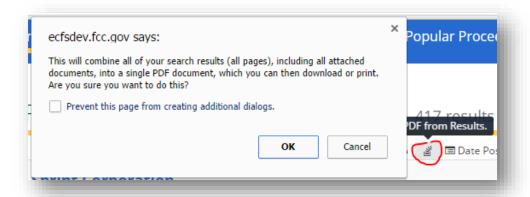
To download a CSV file with the results of your search, click the button (highlighted by the red circle). This will prompt you to save the file. Note that you must narrow your search results list to under 10,000 results before this function becomes available.



8. Create PDF

Some users need to print the entire contents of a number of results. Once you've narrowed your results list to less than 500 items, you can use the Create PDF button to compile a full listing of the results

(including all attached documents) and download them. You will then be able to print that to your local printer.



9. Screen Reader

In addition to standard ADA-compliant accessibility design features, the ECFS application has embedded a screen reading technology to assist sight-impaired users. The AudioEye Ally screen reader is capable of parsing a number of document types, and reading them line-by-line to the user, with many convenience features such as forward and backwards skipping, and speed control.

Appendix A – Advanced Search

Part 1: Advanced Text Search – Boolean search

ECFS 3.0 supports full-text searching of all comments, filings, and proceedings. But to make your searches more productive, some advanced queries are available.

NB: Remember that search results are returned with default sort order of Descending Posted Date. For full-text searches, changing this to Relevance may bring better results to the top of the list.

AND

By default, if you provide two or more search terms, ECFS will return filings that contain ALL of those terms. You can also explicitly request that by using the search qualifier AND in between the terms. e.g., a search on media AND radio will return any filing that contains both the words "media" and "radio", but not if the filing only contains one of those terms.

OR

To find results where one or more of the search terms appear, use the search qualifier OR in between the terms. *e.g.*, a search on media OR radio will return any filing that contains the word "media" and any filing that contains the word "radio".

NOT

This qualifier in front of a search term will filter out any results that contain that term. *e.g.*, a search on media NOT radio will find all filings with the word "media", but filter out any results that also contain the word "radio".

*NB: The search qualifiers above MUST be entered in **UPPER CASE** to be considered as search qualifiers. In all other aspects, search is case-insensitive.

u n

In general, prepositions and articles of speech (e.g., "the", "an", "with", "of", etc.) are de-emphasized when you perform text searches of a phrase. However, by placing quotes around a text phrase, the search engine will return instances of that specific phrase. For example, if you search on the first day of (without quotes), the search engine will look for instances of that phrase, but also broaden the results set to include instances of "on", "the", "first" and "day" anywhere in the filing's text. But if you search "on the first day" (with quotes), then the search will only return specific instances of that phrase, with all of those words in that order (with a caveat, see below); the results set will be much smaller.

Language provisions

The rules for quoted searches above may seem a bit harsh; what if there's a slight spelling error? What if the exact quoted phrase is not found, but something very close is available? What about different tenses of a word, like "days" vs "day"? In most cases, we want to include some small amount of leeway

in the search, and the ECFS search analyzer has been configured to do this. When results are sorted by relevance, the results with the exact phrase, as quoted, are returned first. However, after that list, near-results that differ from the request by only one or two of the following factors will also be included:

- Word Order "day first" provides a near-match for "first day"
- Distance "first whole day" is one degree away from "first day", and is therefore a near match.
- Word Forms or Spelling minor spelling errors, or word form differences (plural forms, etc.)
- Punctuation "first-day" near match to "first day"
- Stopwords articles and other similar parts of speech (e.g., "a", "an", "the") are analyzed with below-normal weighting.
- Weighting certain fields, such as Docket and Filer names, are weighted higher than others, affecting relevance scores for similar results. Also, multiple recurrences of the search terms increase the relevance score of any given result.

Part 2: Advanced Proceeding Search

By default, the Proceedings filter in the search form performs a Boolean **OR** search. *e.g.*, if asked to filter on two Proceedings ("10-1 10-2", as shown in the figure below), the search engine will return results that have been filed into EITHER docket 10-1 **OR** docket 10-2.

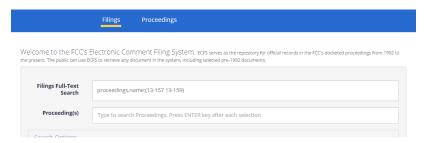


In rare instances, it may be useful to be able to apply more complex Boolean logic to the Proceedings filter (usually when searching for filings that apply to multiple dockets). In such cases, it's possible to make specific field queries in the Full-Text search field.

To perform a filtered text search by field, use the following template in the Full-Text Search field:

```
<fieldname>:<search criteria>
```

Where *<search criteria>* is either a single search term, or a multiple search terms/Boolean statement in parentheses.



Some examples:

To filter the search for filings that have been filed into ALL dockets 13-157, 13-158, and 13-159 (remember, AND is the default connector):

```
proceedings.name: (13-157 13-158 13-159)
```

Must be in dockets 13-157 and 13-158, but must NOT be in 14-28.

```
proceedings.name: (13-157 13-158 NOT 14-28)
```

In Dockets 13-157 AND 13-158, OR in dockets 15-170 AND 10-90.

```
proceedings.name: ((13-157 13-158) OR (15-170 10-90))
```

Appendix B – Setting up an RSS Feed

Many users want to be able to monitor ECFS for new postings, and often accomplish this by manually checking the application several times a day. But an easier way to do this is to utilize the RSS (Really Simple Syndication) feeds available from within ECFS. Using RSS, you will be automatically notified whenever new postings are made.

Many RSS Feed readers are available; some are standalone apps, some work from directly within your favorite browser. Below are instructions for creating a feed directly in Microsoft Outlook.

1. Search

The first step is to define the set of results you want to monitor. The two ways to do this are to:

- Perform a search for filings
- Select a docket number from the Most Popular Proceedings (Hot Dockets) on the home page (this is the easiest way to monitor for new filings in a particular docket).

2. Get the RSS Link

From the results listing page, right-click on the RSS icon at the right of the View Options. Select *Copy Link Address* (menu options will differ, depending on your browser).

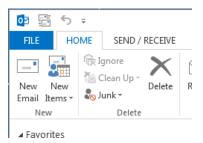


3. Add a Feed to your Reader

If you are using a dedicated feed reader, you can paste the link from Step 2 into the New Feed URL. If you are using Outlook, open Outlook and continue to the next step.

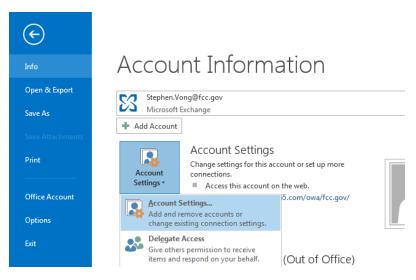
4. Select the File Menu from Outlook

Click on the **File** menu in the top left of your Outlook window.



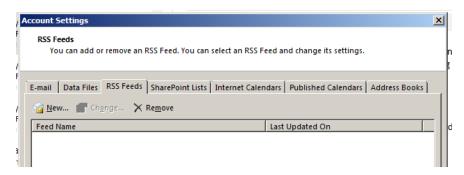
5. Go to Account Settings

Click the Account Settings button, and select the Account Settings option from the dropdown menu.



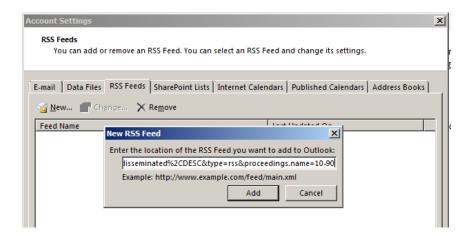
6. Create a New Feed

A popup window will appear. Select the RSS Feeds tab at the top, and click on the New... button.



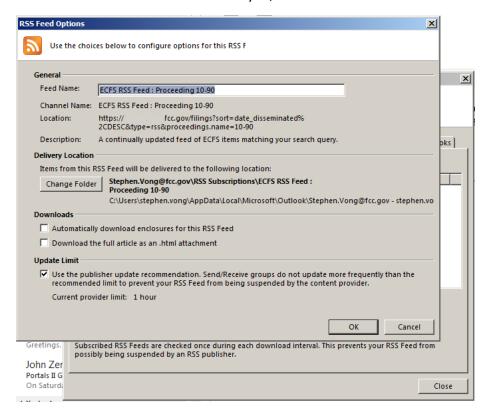
7. Paste in the Feed URL

When prompted, paste in the feed link that you saved by pressing *CTRL>-V* on your keyboard. Click the **Add** button.



8. Name the Feed

Give the Feed a name that makes sense to you, and click Ok.



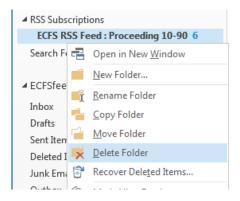
9. Read the Feed

Under the RSS Subscriptions section of your Outlook Left-side Nav Bar, you should now see your new feed. Outlook will periodically update you whenever there are new filings matching your search.



10. Remove the Feed

You can add as many RSS Feeds as you'd like. When you no longer want to follow a feed, you can remove it by right-clicking on the feed and selecting **Delete Folder** from the menu.



ECFS Frequently Asked Questions

What is a Proceeding?

While you don't need to fully understand the FCC rulemaking process to submit a filing, it may help to get a general understanding of some of the terms we use for ECFS. For a discussion of the entire life cycle of a proceeding, please see CGB's fact sheet on "How to Comment".

A Proposed Rulemaking is initiated when someone (usually from outside the FCC) submits a Petition for Rulemaking, recommending a change to a current rule. Suppose in this example that the submitter is applying for a call sign for a new radio station. The FCC may decide to gather more information, releasing a Proposed Rulemaking to the public for a period of comment. This allows the FCC to gather more information from multiple sources to determine whether this Proposed Rulemaking merits more consideration. During the comment period, the public can submit comments through ECFS.

If the FCC determines that it does merit more consideration, a Rulemaking will be released on the same item with another round of commenting from the public. This provides anyone an opportunity to review this data, compare it to their own, and even consider joining the petition or beginning one of their own. Comment periods normally last 60 days, during which anyone can submit their comments through ECFS.

If, after the Rulemaking period, the FCC determines that it wants to pursue the Rulemaking further, the Rulemaking can be assigned a Docket number. A docket number is another way that the FCC and the public can track the item, and as a docket the item can be more formally researched. Assigning a docket number to a proceeding doesn't mean that it will lead to a rule change; however, it usually does mean the proceeding will merit further (and more serious) consideration.

Anything can be assigned a docket number at any time; however, dockets can often follow the standard workflow as follows:

